

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

The general public is once again turning critical of the nation's intelligence gathering community because of recent revelations about CIA activities in Central America, says former agency director Stansfield Turner.

Turner, who directed the CIA during the Carter years, said Thursday the agency is being viewed as a "rogue elephant" because of revelations about a training manual it prepared for anti-Sandinista forces in Nicaragua.

He said he opposed covert action in Nicaragua "for parochial reasons -- it would have hurt the CIA."

Turner also said the Reagan administration has eased restrictions on CIA operations inside the United States, further damaging the agency's image with the American people.

On another matter, he said in an interview he supports the nuclear arms freeze movement because the U.S. needs "to do something dramatic" to halt the arms race.

"There is a certain simplicity in a freeze," Turner explained. "We could start with those weapons that are verifiable, and not all of them are, and work our way down."